

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 07 October 2019

Portfolio:	Housing
Subject:	Affordable Housing Strategy
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priorities:	Providing Housing Choices

Purpose:

To review the consultation results on the Draft Affordable Housing Strategy and adopt the revised version.

Executive summary:

At their meeting on 03 June 2019 the Executive approved the Draft Affordable Housing Strategy for a six-week period of public consultation.

Public consultation took place between the 24 June and 05 August 2019. As a result of that process some small changes have been made to the draft version to inform a final version of the Affordable Housing Strategy which is recommended for adoption.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) notes the feedback received from the public consultation exercise (as outlined in Appendix A to this report) together with the proposed changes to the strategy, as outlined in this report; and
- (b) adopts the Affordable Housing Strategy (as included in Appendix B to this report) to formally replace/supersede the current Housing Strategy (2010) and Affordable Housing Strategy (2005).

Reason:

To adopt an up-to-date Affordable Housing Strategy that contributes to the delivery of the Corporate Priority of 'Providing Housing Choices'.

Cost of proposals:

The costs involved in the preparation and adoption of the Affordable Housing Strategy are covered in existing operational budgets of Fareham Housing.

Appendices: **A:** Consultation Statement: Draft Affordable Housing Strategy (September 2019)

B: Affordable Housing Strategy (final version)

C: Equalities Impact Assessment

Background papers: None.

Reference papers: None.

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	07 October 2019
Subject:	Affordable Housing Strategy
Briefing by:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Portfolio:	Housing

INTRODUCTION

1. The current Housing Strategy (2010) and Affordable Housing Strategy (2005) have all reached the end of their expected period of application. This together with many national changes surrounding affordable housing in recent years, and the adoption of the Council's new Corporate Strategy (2017-2023), mean we are now at the right juncture to seek to adopt a new Affordable Housing Strategy that can supersede and replace the previous strategies.
2. Public consultation on the Draft Affordable Strategy was approved by the Executive at their meeting on 03 June 2019. The Draft Strategy was subsequently subject to a six-week period of public consultation between the 24 June and 05 August 2019. The responses and feedback from that process have been considered and some amendments have been made to the draft document to inform the final version which is included in Appendix B to this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment of the strategy has also been undertaken and this is included as Appendix C.
3. The adoption of a new Affordable Housing Strategy will allow further progress to be made on a revised Allocations Policy and other housing related sub-strategies and work. It also outlines the Council's intention to build further Council homes. These are included together with further actions which support the three Key Objectives of the Affordable Housing Strategy: -
 - To deliver more affordable homes through the planning system;
 - To ensure those homes are the right homes in the right places and that they are truly affordable for those that need them; and
 - To directly deliver more affordable homes by Registered Providers and Fareham Housing, especially targeting those in greater need.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

4. A detailed Consultation Statement has been produced (included in Appendix A) which explains how the consultation process was undertaken and the responses received.

The Consultation Statement identifies that there were 49 responses received to the draft document during the consultation period. 46 of these responses were from members of the public and further responses were also received from Lee Residents Association, Fareham Constituency Labour Party and Bargate Homes. The Consultation Statement provides an overview of all the matters raised and an officer response where appropriate.

5. In addition to these responses a specific Tenants' Focus Group was held relating to the Draft Affordable Housing Strategy and the document was also introduced and discussed at a Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum. The outcomes from these meetings are outlined in Appendix A.

Housing Scrutiny Panel

6. At their meeting on the 11 July 2019 the Housing Scrutiny Panel were provided with a report by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer that gave an overview of the Draft Affordable Housing Strategy and which included a copy of the Draft Strategy in full. Members of the Scrutiny Panel were invited to put forward any comments for the Executive to consider in any subsequent decisions about the document.
7. The outcomes from this are detailed in Appendix A and are included in the Draft Minutes from that Scrutiny Panel meeting. In summary Members of the Housing Scrutiny Panel were broadly positive about the Draft Strategy, noting that it was easy and understandable to read. Several questions and matters of clarity were raised but no amendments or changes to the strategy were sought or requested.

CHANGES MADE TO THE DRAFT STRATEGY

8. Following the consultation process, and having considered the various comments made, officers have made an addition to the document:
 - On page 22 (page 20 of the draft version) an additional 'action' has been added to Objective 2 of the document to *'produce a policy that seeks to identify appropriate 'green' opportunities and solutions for Council owned housing stock (current and/or new)'*.
9. The matter of doing more to look at greener and sustainable approaches to Council housing (new and old) had been raised by several individuals who responded as part of the consultation exercise. It was also seen to be of some importance as part of the exercise undertaken with the Tenants' Focus Group. Greener approaches should contribute positively to environmental sustainability, and assist with the affordability for Council tenants, with the potential for lower utility bills. This will therefore be looked at further as part of the committed objectives of the Affordable Housing Strategy.
10. Other incidental changes proposed to the document include removal of 'draft' stamps and 'draft' references, removal of the 'Have Your Say' pages previously included, and page alterations to ensure enough blank pages are in place to allow the document to be printed in a booklet style.
11. The changes referred to above have been included in the final version of the Affordable Housing Strategy (Appendix B) which is recommended for adoption by the Council.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken of the Affordable Housing Strategy. This is included as Appendix C to this report. The EIA has not identified any detrimental equality impacts as a result of the proposed Affordable Housing Strategy.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Robyn Lyons (Ext 4305)